



Morning Alert - Thursday, July 19, 2018

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## HEADLINES

### Morning news

The networks continued to give extensive coverage to the extreme heat in Japan, saying the mercury climbed to 40.7 degrees Celsius in Tajimi, Gifu, on Wednesday. NTV led with a report on the passing of Keita Asari, founder of the Shiki Theater, at the age of 85 last Friday.

Top stories in national dailies included the enactment of an election system reform bill that will add six seats to the Upper House (Asahi, Mainichi, Yomiuri); plans by Japanese oil distributors to halt imports of Iranian oil (Nikkei); and concern that the heat could affect Olympic athletes in Tokyo in 2020 (Sankei).

## INTERNATIONAL

### President Trump says “no time limit” on North Korea denuclearization

Wednesday evening’s Asahi, Yomiuri, and Nikkei reported on President Trump’s remarks to reporters at the White House on Tuesday, in which the President reportedly said that there is “no time limit” for North Korea to denuclearize and that there is no need to rush the process. Yomiuri and Asahi speculated that the denuclearization talks between the United States and the DPRK may be prolonged.

In a related development, Nikkei wrote this morning that Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga commented on North Korea during a regular press briefing on Wednesday by saying that it is desirable that the denuclearization of the DPRK is implemented at an early date. Concerning the President's reported remarks that there is "no time limit" for North Korea to denuclearize, Suga said Japan has been closely coordinating with the United States on how to achieve denuclearization and that Tokyo hopes that the agreement at the U.S.-DPRK summit will be implemented completely and swiftly.

### **DPRK responds negatively to idea of setting up working groups**

Asahi ran a Seoul-dated report claiming that it has learned from a source connected to U.S.-DPRK relations that North Korea expressed a negative response to the purported proposal made by Secretary of State Pompeo during his talks with Vice Chairman Kim Yong Chol in Pyongyang on July 6-7 to set up working groups on the specifics of the denuclearization process. The paper claimed that recently Pyongyang has been demonstrating a negative attitude toward talks with Washington and conjectured that the Kim regime is trying to delay denuclearization.

### **Foreign nations offer support for Japan after torrential rains**

**Nikkei** reported on aid and condolences from foreign nations in response to the loss of life and damage caused by the torrential rains and floods in western Japan. The paper wrote that Taiwan, the United States, and China were among the first to provide aid and that nations whose leaders have close relations with Prime Minister Abe, such as Russia and Turkey, also offered quick support. The paper wrote that the United States responded quickly, with Ambassador Hagerty tweeting a message of sympathy on July 8 and announcing on July 13 that the U.S. would donate \$100,000 in aid, and President Trump tweeting on July 14, "Our prayers are with those affected by the flooding in Japan." The paper added that the United States also provided manpower, with Iwakuni-based Marines volunteering to help clean up flood-devastated local communities. The paper commented that despite the trade issues between the U.S. and Japan, the swift show of support displayed the solidarity of the two nations. The paper carried a photo of Marines helping with the cleanup in Iwakuni that was provided by the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo.

### **Japanese oil distributors set to halt imports of Iranian oil**

**Nikkei** led with a report saying that Japanese oil distributors are preparing to suspend imports of Iranian crude oil as requested by the U.S. In response, Japan's major banks and maritime shippers notified oil distributors that they may stop conducting business with Iran. The paper wrote that oil imports from Iran are expected to fall to zero as early as October

and that oil distributors will seek imports from Saudi Arabia and other nations as alternative suppliers, adding that a switch in suppliers could lead to a further increase in gasoline prices in Japan.

### **Foreign Minister Kono to visit Asian nations in August**

Mainichi wrote that a GOJ source said on Wednesday that Foreign Minister Kono is planning to visit Singapore, Myanmar, and Bangladesh in early August. In Singapore Kono is planning to attend a series of ASEAN meetings, with the focus on whether he can hold talks with North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho.

### **Japan, Russia to hold 2+2 meeting on July 31 in Moscow**

Nikkei wrote that Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced on Wednesday that Russia and Japan will hold a 2+2 meeting of foreign and defense ministers in Moscow on July 31. The paper speculated that the two nations will discuss such issues as defense exchanges and North Korea and that Moscow may express concern about Japan's enhancement of its missile defense. Yomiuri ran a similar report.

## **ECONOMY**

### **Britain expresses intention to examine possibility of participating in TPP-11**

Mainichi and Yomiuri wrote that British Secretary of State for International Trade Fox said in a speech he delivered in London on Wednesday that his nation is examining the possibility of participating in the TPP-11 trade agreement after Britain leaves the EU. Mainichi speculated that Britain is mulling the idea of participating in the multilateral trade accord in an effort to compensate for the economic damage that will result from its departure from the EU and that London will probably make preparations for joining the TPP-11 after December 2020, when the Brexit transition period will end.

## **SECURITY**

### **Ishigaki mayor expresses intention to accept GSDF deployment**

Asahi, Nikkei, and Sankei wrote that Ishigaki Mayor Nakayama officially decided to accept a Defense Ministry plan to deploy a GSDF missile unit on Ishigaki Island and conveyed the decision to Defense Minister Onodera on Wednesday.

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